

NEVADA

# WOMEN VETERANS

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2011

A woman in a military uniform, including a tan hat and a black polo shirt with a VA patch, is marching and holding a large American flag. She is surrounded by other people, some in uniform and some in civilian attire, in an ornate indoor setting with chandeliers and patterned carpets.

## Governor Opens Mansion For 4th Annual NV Women's Summit

PLUS

**HERstory...**  
**Nevada's Women  
Veterans Share  
Their Stories**



THE HIGH TEA PICTURES

*Also Inside...*  
*She's The Air War Commander*  
*Our Combat Milestones*

## Nevada Office of Veterans Services



Brian Sandoval  
Governor



Caleb Cage  
Executive Director

### **Governor**

The Hon. Brian Sandoval

### **Executive Director**

Caleb S. Cage

### **Deputy Executive Director**

#### **Editor**

Carole Turner

### **Contributors**

Suzanne R. Albin, Pauline Ratliff,  
Kym Elaine Trudeau, Jackie Bouch,  
Sharon Dixon, Judy Gelfand,  
Celeste Lovett, Susan Kinder,  
Reverend Cyndi DeLong, Sandi Clum,  
Sonja R. Hill, LTC, Melissa Naeimi,  
Sharlee W. Smith, LTC (ret.),  
Cheryl Gardner, Ellie Shane Hays

### **Graphic Designer**

Bill DiBenedetto  
Let the Joy Rise, LLC

### **Mailing Address**

Women Veterans Newsletter  
Nevada Office of Veterans Services  
950 West Owens Avenue, Suite 111  
Las Vegas, Nevada 89106



The Nevada Office of Veterans Services was created in 1943 to provide assistance and services to veterans, their family members, and residents of Nevada serving in the Armed Forces of the United States. The Agency has three programs: Veterans Benefit Assistance, Veterans Cemeteries (Boulder City and Fernley) and a State Veterans Home (Boulder City). There are approximately 339,000 veterans residing in Nevada.

For more information call NOVS toll free at 1-866-630-VETS (8387) or visit our web site at [www.veterans.nv.gov](http://www.veterans.nv.gov).

### **NOVS**

Nevada Office of Veterans Services

### **NNVMC**

Northern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery

### **NSVH**

Nevada State Veterans Home

### **SNVMC**

Southern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery

# NEVADA WOMEN VETERANS

Spring 2011 Newsletter

## Features:

Nevada Women Veterans Summit	Page 3
Our Combat Milestones	Page 5
She's The Air War Commander	Page 5
HERstory	Page 6
May Highlights in Women's HERstory	Page 10
New College Grants & Savings	Page 11
Entrepreneurial Bootcamp	Page 12

## Departments:

Carole's Corner	Page 2
Legislation Of Interest To You	Page 12
Did You Know?	Page 12
Veterans Benefits	Page 13
Upcoming Events	Page 14
NOVS Contact Information	Page 14

[www.veterans.nv.gov](http://www.veterans.nv.gov)

## On The Cover... Photos taken at the 4th Annual Nevada Women Veterans Summit



The posting of colors was done by the VA Sierra Nevada Health Care System's "All Women Veterans Color Guard." Celia Ranson, Mary Sedgwick, Yvette Wiederhold & Barbara Curry.



The Governor's Mansion was completed in 1909 and designed by Reno Architect George Ferris. The site was sold to the State by Mrs. T.B. Rickey for \$10, and the construction bid was awarded at \$22,700. First occupied by Acting Governor Denver Dickerson, it is now home to Governor Brian Sandoval, First Lady Kathleen & their three children.



## Carole's Corner...



Carole with Governor Sandoval at Veterans Memorial Hall, Carson City

### A Smashing Success

#### *My Thoughts On The Summit*

If the smiles on the faces of the participants leaving the Governor's Mansion were any indication, the 4th Annual Nevada Women Veterans Summit was the best ever! The compliments and accolades are still

coming in from around the state. From the moment the VA Women Veterans Color Guard posted the colors, to the Governor's greeting, Shoshana Johnson's and Donna McAleer's inspirational remarks, there was rarely a dry eye in the audience. Not to be confused, these were tears of pride, joy, patriotism and enthusiasm. Attendees rated the overall program 4.7 on a scale of 1 – 5, with 5 being the best score possible.

There were informative and personal stories shared by VA Sierra Nevada Healthcare System, Veterans Benefits Administration – Reno, Department of Labor and Nevada Office of Veteran Services representatives. Each participant received a specially designed female veteran's tote bag, and a Veterans and Community Resource Guide.

The ladies were "dressed to the nines" many with hats and donning their Sunday-best or Class "A" uniforms. High tea was served offering tea, fresh strawberries, scones, a variety of finger sandwiches (including crust less cucumber and watercress sandwiches) and an assortment of petit fours. For those who were able to join us, thank you for your support. If you weren't able to join us for the 4th Annual Nevada Women Veterans Summit in Reno, you missed a grand event. Please enjoy the photos on pages 2 and 3.

We look forward to the next Nevada Women Veterans Summit, but we have a tough act to follow!

### AND I QUOTE...

**"LET THE GENERATIONS KNOW THAT WOMEN IN UNIFORM ALSO GUARANTEED THEIR FREEDOM. THAT OUR RESOLVE WAS JUST AS GREAT AS THE BRAVE MEN WHO STOOD AMONG US... THAT THE TEARS FELL JUST AS HARD FOR THOSE WE LEFT BEHIND."**

– Unknown WWII U.S. Army Nurse

## THE NUMBERS

**1,800,000**

Living Women Veterans

**25,000**

Nevada Women Veterans

**20%**

Military Recruits  
That Are Women

**154**

4th Annual Nevada  
Women Veterans  
Summitt Attendees

**46**

Median Age Of  
Women Veterans

**5**

Years It Will Take To  
Double The Enrollment  
Of Women Veterans  
In VA Health Care



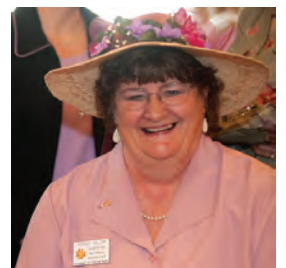
# Nevada Women Veterans Summit - 2011



Co-Mistress Of Ceremony  
**Carole Turner**  
Nevada Office of Veterans Services



Co-Mistress Of Ceremony  
**Zola Ferguson**  
VA Sierra Nevada Health Care System





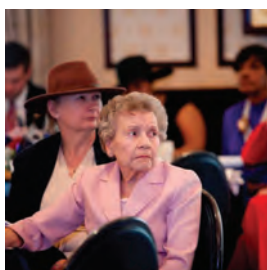
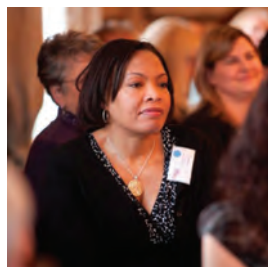
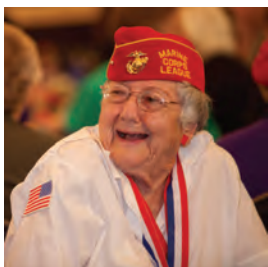
# Nevada Women Veterans Summit - 2011



Keynote Speaker  
**Shoshana Johnson**  
Operation Iraqi Freedom POW



Keynote Speaker  
**Donna McAleer**  
West Point Graduate & Olympian



# OUR MILESTONES

## *Women On The Front Lines*

- 1778** Mary Hays McCauley, known as “Molly Pitcher,” fights beside her husband, John Casper Hays, in the Revolutionary War.
- 1847** Dressed as a man and going by the name of “Bill,” Elizabeth Newcom joins the Army during the Mexican-American War.
- 1861** Not only did Harriet Tubman help about 300 slaves escape to freedom via the Underground Railroad, but when the Civil War broke out she also served as a nurse, spy and scout for the Union forces.
- 1863** Women’s rights activist Mary Edwards Walker tends to Union forces during the Civil War as the Army’s first female physician.
- 1901** The Army Nurse Corps is established.
- 1917** Loretta Walsh becomes the first female yeoman to serve in the Navy and the first woman to serve officially in any of the U.S. Armed Forces in a non-nurse occupation during World War I.
- 1942** The military creates women-only divisions during World War II. It is estimated that about 400,000 women served in the U.S. Army, Navy, Coast Guard & Marines. 67 Army & 11 Navy nurses were captured & held by the Japanese for nearly three years.
- 1948** President Truman signed the Women Armed Services Integration Act of 1948, which created a permanent place for women in the military outside of nursing.
- 1949** Annie Graham becomes the first African American female to join the Marine Corps.
- 1962** Thousands of nurses serve in Vietnam.
- 1967** President Johnson signs legislation allowing women to be promoted to higher service grades, including General & Admiral, and lifting caps on the percentage of women who can serve.
- 1991** About 24,000 women served in the Gulf War. Two of them, Specialist Melissa Rathbun Nealy & Sergeant Rhonda Cornum, were taken prisoner of war.
- 1993** Congress repeals the law banning women from duty on combat ships.
- 1994** Defense Department reverses a rule limiting women’s military assignment.
- 2003** Private Jessica Lynch, Specialists Lori Piestewa and Shoshana Johnson’s convoy is ambushed in Iraq.
- 2008** Ann E. Dunwoody becomes the first woman in U.S. history to become a Four-Star General.
- 2011** Air Force Major General Margaret Woodward oversees the U.S. Air campaign in Libya. (See related story in sidebar)

## Margaret Woodward Air War Commander



The U.S. Air Force General directing the airstrikes over Libya has flown aerial tankers into battle and commanded the pilots of Air Force One – and is now the first woman to lead a combat air campaign.

Major General Margaret Woodward, 51, was in charge of the 17th Air Force, a unit that supports humanitarian and peacekeeping missions in Africa, when she was ordered to set up the United Nations sanctioned no-fly zone over Libya.

In the first 11 days, U.S. and coalition aircraft have flown more than 1,400 sorties. They have bombed Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi’s air defenses and helped push Qaddafi’s army back from the edge of Benghazi in eastern Libya to his hometown of Sirte, 340 miles to the west.

That the execution looks smooth is no surprise, said Michael Dunn, a retired Air Force Lieutenant General who is President/CEO of the Air Force Assn., a D.C.-based nonprofit that promotes air power and looks after the interests of Air Force veterans.

“Look at her background,” he said, noting how Woodward has flown in wartime and commanded two Air Force wings and an operations group. “She’s battle tested... those were tough wings.”

A 1982 graduate of ASU, she earned advanced degrees at the National War College and Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. When she entered the Air Force in 1983, women were banned from flying in combat.

“I was still smarting under the fact that I couldn’t go fly a fighter and women couldn’t fly in combat. Thankfully, that changed over time,” Woodward told the Tampa Tribune in a 2005 interview.



# HERSTORY

## Nevada Women Veterans

### Nevada's heroines tell their phenomenal stories of pride, courage and service.

*Editor's Note: These stories were provided to NOV'S in support of Nevada Assembly Bill 277, which would create a "Nevada Women Veterans License Plate," and they were just too good not to share (see pg. 11 for the related article).*

#### **Suzanne R. Albin** ★ NVARNG

Command Sergeant Major  
1st Battalion 421st Regiment (RTI)  
Reno, Nevada

I am a current member of the NV Army National Guard. I have almost 22 years of service and 20 of those are active duty with the Guard. I am the only female Command Sergeant Major currently serving in the NV Army National Guard and I think it would be an extreme honor to have a license plate to honor Nevada women veterans.

#### **Susan Kinder** ★ U.S.M.C.

Sun Valley, Nevada

I am a member of the Pyramid Lake Paiute and Kansas Kickapoo tribes of the United States, and a resident of Sun Valley, Nevada. I graduated from Reed H.S. in Sparks, NV, in 1977. I joined the U.S. Marine Corps in 1978 and continued my service through 1987. I am a second generation marine; my father was a 1st Sgt of the U.S. Marine Corps along with two of four brothers, and my husband. One brother was in the army, and another was not only a marine, but now a Capt with the Nevada Army National Guard and Detective with the Reno Police Department.

What makes me different from my male counterparts? I am also the mother of a marine who has done two stints in Iraq. I have not only experienced being the marine, but also the daughter and mother of a marine, as well as the wife of a prior marine for over 20 years. Native Americans seem to see the military differently than other Americans. We see it as heritage, and the warrior way. I am proud to say I am a woman warrior of the U.S. Marine Corps in the Indian tradition.

I am utilizing my experience in the service now at the University of Nevada, Reno, in the capacity of helping students in the College of Science. My family's people have supported the state of Nevada and the military for longer than Nevada has been a state, and my family will continue for generations to follow, because that is what we do.

#### **Rev. Cyndi DeLong** ★ U.S.N.

Chaplain (AZAN, VT-28)  
Las Vegas, Nevada

I am excited to hear about the proposal, Assembly Bill 277, to honor women veterans in Nevada. As a Vietnam-era veteran, I am always looking for opportunities to remind people of the important role women played in the military long before we achieved "equal" enlistment status. While many of the young men at that time were finding ways to avoid the draft or to serve without going into the war zone, many women were enlisting as a way to support our troops overseas. It wasn't popular, but it was important for me to express my love for the United States and my belief in "equal employment opportunities" by stepping up in a bigger way.

During this time in our military history, many areas of service were still unavailable to women, but I found the perfect spot in navy aviation. My permanent duty station was at NAS Corpus Christi, TX, where I worked with pilots in training, providing support through the quality assurance shop, qualifying test pilots and writing up incident reports. This doesn't sound like a very important function, but this position had not been filled by a woman before and made it possible for my male counterpart to work in one of the female restricted ratings.

What was significant for me at that time was representing a population (women) in a male-dominated environment. The work that was accomplished, and done well, by women in the military helped develop a new culture that validated the woman's place in the military, beyond the previously stereotypical nursing roles. My service also provided me with the self-esteem and confidence to take this military experience into the civilian workforce, working easily in other industries newly opening to the acceptance of women in previously male-only positions.

This service has benefited me well during the ensuing 40 years since my enlistment and I have not regretted it one moment since.

#### **Pauline Ratliff** ★

Las Vegas, Nevada

I'm a WWII veteran and things sure were different then. It would be nice if more girls would join the service. It was good training. Good luck with Assembly Bill 277.

#### **Ellie Shane Hays** ★ U.S.N.

Sparks, Nevada

I support Assembly Bill 277. There are a lot more veteran men than veteran women. When people hear I'm a veteran they seem surprised, "Oh, you're a veteran?"

When I was 14 years old, I saw 3 WAVES in dress whites on the corner of Second and Virginia Street in Reno. I thought they were so sharp. At that moment I knew I was going in the navy when I grew up. If I was dating someone and he started to get serious I dropped him like a hot potato because I was going in the navy. No one was going to stop me. Two days after my 18th birthday I joined the U.S. Naval Reserve. In January of 1954, I signed up for active duty after a year at the University of Nevada, Reno.

I was off to boot camp at Bainbridge, MD. I was stationed at Corpus Christi, TX, then Grosse Ile, MI. At Grosse Ile, I switched to regular navy and requested Navy Dental Technician School at Bainbridge. From school I was sent to Washington, D.C. for 18 months. When I wasn't working, several of my friends and I would put on our dress blues and go sight-seeing. I loved the Franciscan Monastery. It was so beautiful and peaceful. We'd go to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Colors at the Marine Monument, the Lincoln Memorial, Washington Monument and many more in and around D.C. and Virginia. I played softball and basketball, was on a WAVES drill team and marched in parades. I really loved the navy. I was just thinking the other day, "I'm 76 years old, and as I look back, my time in the navy was some of the happiest days of my life."

I'm a "Proud Women Veteran," and would sure be honored to have a license plate for women veterans.



**Kym Elaine Trudeau** ★ **U.S.A.F.**  
*Las Vegas, Nevada*

I am a veteran of the United States Air Force. I served from 24 NOV 74 - 25 NOV 78. I was honorably discharged with the rank of Sergeant (E-3). I am a Vietnam-era veteran.

I was stationed at Nellis AFB, Las Vegas, NV. My career field was Aircraft Maintenance Specialist, Jet Engines 1 & 2. I worked in the Phase Docks (inspection/maintenance area for all aircraft on active flying status, on the flight line) as an aircraft inspector and jet mechanic.

I am most proud of my service as a woman in this field. You see, I was the only (and I believe the first) woman in my squadron to do this job at that time. "Women's Lib" was just getting underway in the turbulent 1970's and I stepped into this career field not as a "Women's Libber," but as a Proud American. There were precious few women in this particular career field and we were scrutinized very carefully. The men I worked beside were very accepting of me because I did my work and did it well. In fact, I received "Airman of the Month" for July 1977. However, some of the other airmen in my career field who I had not worked beside were harder on me and that was alright, because it made me a better jet mechanic and Sergeant.

I would be extremely proud to display my service as a woman in the air force on my vehicle. It has been many years since I was in the military and I still feel very connected to my fellow service women and men. I avail myself of as many veteran services that are relevant to me and this would certainly be one of those services.

It would be my honor to display my service on my license plate for the public to see, that I, as a woman veteran, stood tall and strong for America during my active duty tour and now.

Please add my name to the list as a supporter of Assembly Bill Number 277.

**Sonya R. Hill** ★ **U.S.A.F.**  
*Las Vegas, Nevada*

I was a Lt Col, and on active duty in the U. S. Air Force Nurse Corps from 1981 - 1992. In 1984, I was an obstetrical nurse at Cannon AFB, NM. On 19 OCT 84, I worked the labor and delivery room suite to care for a young Airman who was newly assigned to the base and had no family or friends in the area to support her during labor. This is unique, because I was also in active labor that day. I delivered my own baby on 20 OCT 84.

**Celeste Lovett** ★ **U.S.A.**  
*Henderson, Nevada*

I served in the U.S. Army from 1974-1977. I was assigned to basic training at Ft. Jackson, SC, in one of the last all-woman companies before men and women started training together. I joined for the sole purpose of serving my country and at the same time working at an MOS that I already enjoyed and that is as a bands-woman. My MOS was percussionist and I trained in Norfolk, VA, at the U.S. Military School of Music for 6 months along with all the other branches of the military. The training was very strenuous and by the time I graduated, I was at my peak performance level. I arrived at my permanent duty station in Heidelberg, Germany, in September of 1975. I had just turned 19 years old. I remember spending my birthday in the day room of Patton Barracks where all bandsmen were housed.

The 33rd Army Band was the European Headquarters Band and I was one of seven women out of a 35-member band. Being a woman percussionist (drummer) presented itself with certain challenges. For example, because we wore dress greens or dress blues to perform in, this meant that I had to wear skirts. At the time, women did not have the option of wearing slacks; only skirts were considered proper uniform. Slacks were simply not available to women. For a woman percussionist, this was a challenge in several ways:

1. I could not play the drum set, as sitting before a drum set was not possible with a skirt.

2. Wearing a sling snare drum (marching drum) required the left leg rest (a metal curved piece which rested on the left thigh) to ruin all my hosiery. Male bandsmen did not have this problem as the leg rest rested on a pant-covered thigh.

3. During especially cold outside jobs, women were excused due to the little protection they had from the elements in wearing skirts. However, I could not be excused as drummers were necessary, even in the smaller ensembles.

These all provided my commander with a unique set of problems which leads to the interesting part of this story.

In 1976, my commander decided to give me permission to wear slacks when on-the-job wearing blues or greens. He sent

me to a German tailor who made two pairs of pants for me to match exactly the material of both the blues and greens uniforms. The other women in the band still were required to wear the standard skirts. One day, on another base in Germany, the band was allowed 30 minutes before a performance to walk around the base. Shortly thereafter, two military police of that base came up to me and told me that I was out of uniform and instructed me to be escorted by them to the MP office on base as I would be written up for being out of uniform. My attempts to explain the situation were fruitless. My commander had to be found and brought to the MP station to allow for my release. From that day forward, I had to carry a special note of permission explaining my being out of uniform. It was on letterhead and signed by my commander. Now that I was allowed to officially wear slacks, I was also allowed to better perform my duties as a woman percussionist in the U.S. European Headquarters Army Band.

It was such an honor to have served my country in this way. Many may think that the band really is not so essential; however, there was such a sense of pride in knowing that we were providing positive P.R. for all Americans in the presence of the German people. We toured beyond Germany and into other countries including Saudi Arabia. Everywhere we went, we represented Americans and the welcomes we received were usually very sincere. The women in the band were always treated with extra kindness by those for whom we performed. Bouquets of flowers at the end of concerts were not uncommon. We were able to see with our own eyes the respect of others for our country. I will always be thankful for my time in service.

**Cheryl Gardner** ★ **U.S.M.C.**  
Women Marines Association Area Director  
Department of NV Marine Corps League Adjutant  
*Las Vegas, Nevada*

When I approached Elliot Anderson after he made his bid for his seat in the Nevada Assembly and asked him if he won that seat would one of his first actions be to sponsor a bill for the State of Nevada to recognize female veterans by issuing a specialty license plate available at the DMV, he enthusiastically agreed to do so. He has kept me apprised about his progress and now when he phoned me over a month ago,

he let me know the bill had been penned and was ready for action, I was gratified. He asked me to gather up several women who could testify via teleconferencing about their experience serving in the armed forces, and I proceeded to do so.

Tennessee was the first state to issue a specialty license plate for women veterans, followed by New Mexico and then Illinois and three or four other states. I initially did my research and sent my letter containing that information to Assemblyman Anderson so he would be armed with that background for his bill many months ago.

For too long women in military service for America have been ignored. While many generations of military women were not allowed to serve in combat areas (with the exception of medical teams), we did replace the men by filling their administrative jobs (i.e., secretarial, postal, laundry, food service, air tower control) so they could go off to war. Today's women in the military have duties far reaching and nongender specific. I served in the United States Marine Corps from July 1966-December 1967. I served as an executive secretary at both of my duty stations (NAS, Memphis, TN; Eighth Marine Corps District, Kansas City, MO). There was no draft for women. I willingly and proudly raised my right hand and took that oath.

It is time for women veterans to be recognized across the board, and Nevada should be proud to do so.

**Judy Gelfand** ★ **U.S.A.**  
*Las Vegas, Nevada*

I am a veteran of the U.S. Army WACs from January 1970-April 1972. Obviously, this was during a time of war "conflict" for the United States against North Vietnam in support of South Vietnam. Because I was a female and not in a "war" critical MOS, I remained stationed in the United States.

My first duty station was 3rd Army Headquarters, Fort McPherson, GA, where I was assigned to the Hardship Reassignment Section where I was the secretary/admin to the Major in charge of that section. We reviewed and processed requests for issues like Sole Surviving Son, Bereavement, Family Illness, etc. I was there just about 18 months, when I was reassigned to 6th Army Headquarters,

Presidio of San Francisco. Not exactly hardship duty, but I was classified document custodian for the Deputy Chief of Staff, Personnel, where I was assigned until I completed my service. I guess what I did was keep administrative tasks for the draftees and regular army men. Not very exciting, but it was a small job in a long list of jobs that needed to be done.

I'm glad to have had the opportunity to serve my country in even such a small way.

**Jackie Bouch** ★ **U.S.A.**  
*Reno, Nevada*

I am asking for support for Assembly Bill 277, not for my accomplishments as an active duty member but as a female veteran and as a forgotten member of the military. Even though women have served with our male counterparts, it seems difficult for male veterans and people who have never served to remember that women have earned the right to be called "veteran."

My husband and I are both disabled veterans. I attend almost all of my husband's appointments with him and make most of his appointments, request refills on his prescriptions and all of the rest of the "good wifely" and "enlisted" duties. I do not have a problem with this but I do object to male veterans assuming that I am just there with someone else. I have had to assert myself as I was standing in line to check in – that I was actually next in line, male veterans walked up, stood beside me and just assumed I was with the man in front of me, even the male staff behind the counter assumed I was with the veteran in front of me.

My other issue is the VA staff forgetting that females are also veterans. Granted, my name is a unisex name, but that does not mean that the staff should assume they are calling for a man. I have actually had a doctor, nurses and other staff members call for Mr. Bouch when they were calling for me. Ironically enough, I have also had female pharmacist treat me a lot different from the male veterans, two female pharmacist bent over backwards to help men, but when I walked up to the counter they were rude and dismissive to me.

I believe that passing this bill for female veteran license plates would aid in making more people recognize females as also being veterans and having the same rights as our male counterparts!

**Sandi Clum** ★ **U.S.A. (Ret.), U.S.A.F.**  
VFW Certified National Recruiter  
VFW Dept. of NV VOD/PP Chairlady  
American Legion White Pine Post #3 Financial Officer  
*McGill, Nevada*

As a 35-year veteran/retiree, it would be an honor to be able to have a license plate that indicated that I was a proud woman veteran. I am a woman veteran, still a small portion of our military serving our country proudly, who was on active duty in army during Vietnam and the air force during Desert Storm.

You can get veteran plates for the branch you served but I think that women who chose to serve should be able to show how we served. We currently have army veteran plates on our SUV because my husband retired from the army, but I would much rather have a women veterans plate on MY car.

**Sharon Dixon-Potter** ★ **NVARNG**  
*Las Vegas, Nevada*

As we know, women were not allowed to fight on the front lines in the past; however, it's a new day and women are doing quite a few things that their male counterparts are doing, from military police, pilots etc. Leadership in the military should ensure female soldiers are given the same quality training as their male counterparts. They should not take it for granted that because the majority of the military are men that the women don't need to receive the same training.

Women, should be trained to have their fellow soldier's back, as they would, train a male soldier to have a male soldiers back. They should include the females in important briefings, especially female leaders. When a leader in the military states that a female is going to be honored for something she should receive the recognition that she deserves, women should not be taken for granted in any way.

I have read articles and seen on television where male soldiers did not think women deserved the Medal of Honor for saving someone's life, and why not, because she is a woman? This culture needs to change.

I must say that when I was overseas I was respected by the male soldiers because, I felt there was a need to demand respect. Bottom line: women are now serving on the front line and should be given special licence plates in recognition of that.

Oh, and by the way, we need female rings...memorabilia in recognized veteran organization's magazines, women might want to order some of this merchandise as well; for the most part, it's all for men.



**Carole Turner, R.N. ★ U.S.A.F.**

NOVS Deputy Executive Director  
Henderson, Nevada

It was the summer of 1965 when military tanks and Humvees rolled down the middle of my residential street in Los Angeles, California, during the height of the Watts riots. I was fifteen years old. It was then and there that I declared to my parents that I was going to join the military.

Eight years later I was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force Nurse Corps. I volunteered to fly C-131 air-evacuation missions to rescue injured soldiers serving in the Republic of Vietnam. Due to an injury sustained during flight school training, I never made it to Vietnam; however, I completed my tour of duty stateside at Davis-Monthan AFB, SAC, Tucson, AZ. I resigned my commission in 1975 but remained in the U.S. Air Force Reserves an additional six years.

After leaving the military, I transferred my love of country and men and women in military service to serve as a Department of Veterans Affairs nurse, completing 25 years of federal service caring for military service members and veterans. I am now serving Nevada veterans. My military and government experiences taught me many things, most importantly that women in the military, their accomplishments and contributions are, more often than not, under-recognized and unrewarded, in part because we take our service for granted and don't see our service as anything remarkable.

I'm here to tell you that not only have women served as far back as the American Revolution to defend American's freedoms and liberties; military nurses have cared for and saved the lives of our military comrades, thereby affording them the opportunity to be honored as veterans. Nevada women are veterans too . . . and I am one of those Nevadans who proudly boast that honor; serving those who served for 39 years.

**Melissa Naeimi ★ U.S.A.**

Sparks, Nevada

I enlisted in the U.S. Army on April 15, 1987. After receiving 18 months of German training at the Presidio of Monterrey Defense Language Institute and six months of classified M.I. German linguist training at Goodfellow AFB, I served at Field Station Berlin, 1989-1991. It was there that I served on a live mission and witnessed the dismantling of the Berlin Wall. I will always look back on that time as the highlight of my youth.

Following the reunification of Germany, German linguists were sent for retraining in another language. I then received 12 months Russian training at DLI and another six months training at

Goodfellow, followed by an assignment in Ft. Richardson, AK. I was able to finish my B.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies, German and History, at the Univ. of Alaska, Anchorage. I would have never "seen the world" or attempted to run and perform pushups without my military experiences.

Following my discharge, I taught public school, including International Baccalaureate level German in Garland, TX. It was not until I moved to Nevada that the Nevada Board of Education refused to recognize my alternative certification through Troops to Teachers that I received in central Texas, and despite having taught eight years in Texas and California, I was told to redo my bachelor's degree and student teach. The Nevada State Board of Education effectively terminated my teaching career and wasted the skills I had learned during my military service by refusing to recognize Troops to Teachers training and my on the job internship year at Killeen Independent School District, which replaced student teaching. I was unable to stop working full time and go without health insurance for my family to redo my teacher's certification in secondary German and social studies.

I look upon my military career and the skills I learned with wistfulness, and it is my hope that I can again teach, if the Nevada Board of Education would recognize my eight years of teaching experience, Troops to Teachers training, and Texas alternative certification.

**Sharlee "Charley" Smith ★ U.S.A.**

Lieutenant Colonel (Ret.)  
NNVMC Advisory Committee  
Reno, Nevada

I joined the Army in 1981 and turned 30 years old the day before I graduated from Basic Training. As a mother of a twelve-year-old daughter, a full-time college student, and an Infantry Company Clerk, I was not the typical U.S. Army Reserve Female Soldier. After graduating from Central Oregon Community College, I entered Oregon State University and was pursued by the Army ROTC to join their ranks. I graduated two years later and received my commission as a Second Lieutenant.

First in my Adjutant General's Officer Basic Course, I was selected for a Regular Army tour at the Kansas City Recruiting Battalion (85-88). Upon my return home to Nevada, I joined the Army National Guard. I began my traditional service as the 422nd Signal Battalion Adjutant (89-92), during which time I became Active Guard Reserve, earned the coveted Signal Branch flags, and received laudatory accolades for my accomplishments and expertise during the mobilization of the 72nd MP Company to

Desert Storm. I was selected as the Reserve Officer's Association Nevada Chapter Outstanding Junior Officer in 1992.

I then served as the 321st Signal Company (Lt Troop) Commander (92-94, first female commander). My amazing team of officers and soldiers transitioned the Pony Express unit into a technical support unit capable of worldwide communications earning notoriety from both the National Guard and the U.S. Regular Army. If that wasn't enough, I simultaneously served as the 422nd Signal Battalion Area Signal Center Officer and Cable Communications Officer, attended the Combined Arms & Services Staff School, the Command & General Staff College, and courses for Safety, Movement, Mobilization, Family Programs, Quality Awareness, and Federal Emergency Management (92-95).

Transferring to State HQ, I served as the Plans & Action Branch Officer (95-97), where we established programs for Soldier Readiness Processing and standards for the Promotion and Retention Boards. At the same time, I also served as the State Casualty Assistance Officer, was the first Federal Women's Program Manager, and served on the Nevada Guard's first Strategic Planning Team.

My next move took me to the 99th Troop Command Admin. Officer (first female) and Operations & Training Officer (S-3, first female) positions, a 600-plus soldier Battalion with elements throughout the State. During this period (97-98), I was responsible for opening and moving over 350 Soldiers into the Washoe County Training Center at Stead, and my team was recognized for our efforts in establishing a training/qualification tracking system, and coordinated and executed demanding training events.

I then went to the UNR ROTC Program as their Exec. Officer (98-02, first female), AND served as the Recruiting Officer during the first year. I taught both the Military Science I & II level classes, managed the cadre in receiving the highest Command Inspection honors, conducted recruiting events, and earned my master's degree during this period.

My final position (02-06) was Mobilization/Readiness Officer for the NVANG. We mobilized 68% of the State's Soldiers to OIF, OEF, and ONE, while I also served as the Command Inspection Team Chief (first female) and the Exec. Officer (first female) for the Deputy Chief of Staff for Training & Operations.

For the past 4 years, I have had the pleasure to serve on the Planning Committee for the annual Nevada Women Veterans Summit. ■



# MAY HIGHLIGHTS

## *In Women's Herstory*



**May 1, 1950**

Gwendolyn Brooks becomes the first African-American woman to receive the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry, named Library of Congress's Consultant in Poetry (later called Poet Laureate) in 1985



**May 5, 1938**

Dr. Dorothy H. Andersen presents results of her medical research identifying the disease cystic fibrosis at a meeting of the American Pediatric Association



**May 8, 1914**

President Woodrow Wilson signs a proclamation designating the second Sunday in May as Mother's Day



**May 10, 1872**

Victoria Woodhull is nominated as the first woman candidate for U.S. President for the Equal Rights Party



**May 12, 1968**

A 12-block Mother's Day march of "welfare mothers" is held in Washington, D.C., led by Coretta Scott King accompanied by Ethel Kennedy



**May 21, 1973**

Lynn Genesko, a swimmer, receives the first athletic scholarship awarded to a woman (University of Miami)

**May 21, 1932**

Amelia Earhart Putnam is the first woman to complete a solo transatlantic flight. She flew from Newfoundland to Ireland, a 2,026 mile trip, in just under 15 hours



**May 29, 1977**

Janet Guthrie becomes the first woman to qualify for and complete the Indy 500



## World's Last Surviving Female World War I Veteran Celebrated 110th Birthday

Not only is Florence Green, from Norfolk, UK, the only female veteran left who served in the 1914-18 conflict, she is the only WWI veteran left across the world, [The Independent reports.] In 1918, 17-year-old Florence signed up for the newly founded Women's Royal Air Force (WRAF). The WRAF's original mission was to provide female mechanics, to allow men to fight in the war, but with a massive enrollment, many women ended up in other volunteer positions. She never saw the front line and instead worked as a waitress at an air force base in Marham, Norfolk. However, her WRAF service qualifies her for veteran status and she is the only surviving Briton from the conflict. The last surviving U.S. World War I veteran, Frank Buckles, passed away February 27, 2011. Florence has outlived her husband by 41 years and lives with her 89-year-old daughter, one of her three children. When asked what it felt like to turn 110, she said, "It's not much different to being 109."





## Nevada Treasurer's Office Teams Up with USAA to Help Military Families Save for College

Carson City — State Treasurer Kate Marshall announced that families of recent Purple Heart recipients in Nevada can now receive up to \$1,500 in matching 529 College Savings Plan contributions through the USAA® Distinguished Valor Matching Grant Program.

Since Nevada is the home state for the USAA 529 College Savings Plan, the USAA® Distinguished Valor Matching Grant Program will only be eligible to plan account owners who are Nevada residents or stationed in Nevada. A Nevadan is eligible for the grant if he or she is a child of a Purple Heart recipient from Operation Enduring Freedom or Iraqi Freedom.

USAA, located in San Antonio, Texas, provides broad-based financial services to 7.8 million members of the U.S. military and their families and is known for its legendary commitment to its members and the military community.

"The USAA® Distinguished Valor Matching Grant Program provides an opportunity for us to give back to those military members and their families who have given so much for our country," said Dan McNamara, president of USAA Investment Management Company. "Together with the state of Nevada and Program Manager Upromise Investments®, we're able to launch a program that helps families prepare for one of the most significant expenses they'll face — the expense of higher education."



Additional benefits of the USAA® Distinguished Valor Matching Grant Program include:

- ♦ The Minimum Balance Fee (\$15) and the State Maintenance Fee (\$15) are waived.
- ♦ The Upromise® service program ([www.upromise.com/welcome](http://www.upromise.com/welcome)), which allows for a percentage of qualified purchases to be returned to a designated 529 College Savings Plan.

Grant applications will be accepted during this pilot program through December 31. To apply or to obtain additional information, visit [www.usaa.com/matchinggrant](http://www.usaa.com/matchinggrant)

The Nevada College Savings Plan program, administered by the Nevada State Treasurer's Office, currently has assets totaling more than \$6 billion with over 430,000 account owners. USAA's 529 College Savings Plan is ranked number 1 in 1-, 3-, and 5-year performance categories as of December 1, 2010, by [savingforcollege.com](http://savingforcollege.com), an independently sponsored web site dedicated to assisting parents and students with planning for college. For more information about how you can begin to "Save for College, One Step at a Time," go to [www.nevadatreasurer.gov](http://www.nevadatreasurer.gov), or call 702-486-2025 or 888-477-2667 (toll free).

“



*"Our nation and state are indebted to members of the military for their many contributions to the freedoms we enjoy today. The USAA Distinguished Valor Matching Grant Program is a simple way to say 'thank you' for your service and sacrifice."*

— State Treasurer Kate Marshall

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USAA membership is open to all who are serving or have honorably served our nation in the U.S. military and their families. For more information about USAA, or to learn more about membership, visit [www.usaa.com](http://www.usaa.com) or call 800-531-USAA (4752).



*Consider the investment objectives, risks, charges and expenses of the USAA College Savings Plan (Plan) carefully before investing. Call 800-292-8825 to request a Plan Description and Participation Agreement containing this and other information about the Plan. Read it carefully before investing. If you or the beneficiary are not residents of the state of Nevada, consider before investing whether your or the beneficiary's home state offers a 529 plan that provides its taxpayers with state tax and other benefits not available through this Plan. Please consult your tax adviser.*

## Nevada License Plate Honoring Women Veterans Proposed



Legislation was introduced during Nevada's 76th Legislative session on behalf of the Legislative Committee on Senior Citizens, Veterans and Adults with Special Needs (Senate Bill No. 274) and Assemblyman Elliot Anderson (Assembly Bill No. 277 ) which, WHEN PASSED, will create a Nevada license plate honoring women veterans.



## Lawmakers To Introduce Bill To Expand Legal Rights, Protections To Military Victims Of Sexual Assault



Congressional lawmakers will introduce a bipartisan bill that for the first time would provide expanded legal rights and protections for service members who have been the victims of sexual assault while serving in the military. The Defense STRONG (Sexual Trauma Response, Oversight and Good Governance) Act, legislation co-sponsored by Rep. Niki Tsongas (D-Mass.) and Rep. Mike Turner (R-Ohio), would provide victims with the right to legal counsel and the right to transfer to another base. It also would allow them to maintain confidentiality when speaking with victim advocates. In addition, the bill would mandate increased training on sexual assault prevention for troops.



A recent study shows women in the military who have returned from Iraq or Afghanistan are more likely to be diagnosed with mental health issues than their male counterparts. Additionally, women are also more likely than men to suffer from depression and have more difficulty transitioning back into civilian life after service. However, men are more likely than women to receive benefits for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) needs to better inform female veterans about specific services available to them because female veterans appear to be less aware of the services available to them through Women Veterans Coordinators. To read this article in full, please go to: <http://militarytimes.com/news/2011/01/ap-military-female-veterans-missing-out-on-post-war-benefits-011011/>

## 2nd Annual Combat Trauma Conference

Returning Women Warrior and Veterans Issues

**"She's back, but she's not the same!"**

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

May 25-26, 2011

Contact: Sharon Steinberg, WestCare Foundation  
702-385-2090 - [sharon.steinberg@westcare.com](mailto:sharon.steinberg@westcare.com)



## Women Veterans Entrepreneurial Bootcamp



V-WISE is committed to women veterans by providing them the tools to become successful entrepreneurs. V-WISE recognizes entrepreneurship as an important part of economic growth across the country and this program is the key for women veterans to truly pursue their dreams and to make them a reality. V-WISE is open to all female veterans and spouses/partners of veteran business owners. Florida State University at College of Business is also hosting a 2-day National Entrepreneurial Bootcamp EBV Conference in Orlando in Oct 2011. Visit their website: <http://whitman.syr.edu/vwise/>



## Don't

### Do Your Claim Alone

*Veterans Service Officers Can Help*

The Nevada Office of Veterans Services (NOVS) employs nine Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) accredited Veterans Service Officers (VSO) and three Administrative Assistants (AA) to assist veterans with filing claims for their VA and State benefits. NOVS VSO's are not VA employees nor do we represent the federal VA. NOVS VSO office locations and contact information are listed on the last page of this publication. VSOs are trained by the VA to assist you with filing your claim **at no cost to you!**

All of our VSO's are veterans, so you will be dealing with someone who has experienced military service. The VSO's go through annual VA Service Officer training to maintain accreditation. They remain up-to-date on VA laws and regulations to help you file your claim. All too often, women veterans have sensitive issues that need to be addressed such as filing claims for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) with or without Military Sexual Trauma (MST).

NOVS has three women veteran VSO's and a State of Nevada Women Veterans Coordinator. To contact the VSO or AA in your area, visit our web site at [www.veterans.nv.gov](http://www.veterans.nv.gov), or **call toll free (866) 630-VETS (8387)**. If you haven't done so already, please contact your local VSO to go over all your VA benefits.

## VA Benefits & Services

- ♦ Health promotion & disease prevention.
- ♦ Primary care, acute medical/surgical, telephone, emergency, education, vocational rehabilitation.
- ♦ Substance abuse treatment, mental health, domiciliary, housing, rehabilitation and long term care.
- ♦ Women's gender-specific health care: hormone replacement therapy, breast & gynecological care, maternity & limited infertility (excluding in-vitro fertilization).
- ♦ Children of women Vietnam veterans may be eligible for health care & compensation for certain birth defects.
- ♦ Special Monthly Compensation (SMC) for the loss or loss of use of specific organs or extremities, to include hysterectomy and loss of tissue from a single breast, or both breasts due to mastectomy, or radiation treatment.
- ♦ Military Sexual Trauma (MST) counseling & treatment, even without filing a service-connection claim for disability.



## CLAIMS PROCESS 101

Below are the basic steps to filing a VA claim and the type of assistance you can expect from a NOVS Veterans Service Officer (VSO).

**POA:** The VSO will ask for a limited Power of Attorney (POA) so that they can process your claim. Don't be afraid of this transaction. They will need authorization in order to obtain important documents to appropriately submit your claim.

**Intake:** The VSO will conduct an initial 1:1 interview with you to discuss your case. If appropriate, the VSO can request your Military Case File or "C-File."

**"C-File":** After receiving the "C-File", the VSO will thoroughly review it and discuss the intricacies of your claim with you.

**Request DD-214:** If you don't have your Discharge Papers or Separation Documents, you can order your DD-214, Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty, by going online:

<http://www.archives.gov/veterans/evetrecs/index.html>

(NOTE: Your local AA can assist you with your request for an official copy of your DD-214.)

**File Claim:** When all of the military and civilian medical records are collected, the VSO does an assessment to determine if you have a valid claim for a service connected disability or pension benefits. When all parties have conferred and are in agreement, the VSO will then file the claim with the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) Office on your behalf. (NOTE: Appeals cannot be filed by e-mail. At times, claims are returned for more information or can be disapproved at any stage in the process.) If disapproved, an VSO can:

- ♦ File a Notice of Disagreement (NOD) on behalf of the Veteran.
- ♦ Appeal your claim to the Decision Review Officer (DRO).
- ♦ Appeal your claim to the Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA).

If your claim is disapproved by the BVA, it is appealed to the Appeals Management Center (AMC).

If your claim is disapproved by the AMC, you have the option to pay an attorney to appeal to the Courts of Appeals. At this point, only one agency/person can hold the veteran's POA so the VSO will relinquish POA to your attorney. (NOTE: NOVS VSO's cannot represent the veteran in the United States Court of Veterans Appeals.)

**The #1 Challenge We Face:**

**MANY WOMEN VETERANS DO NOT SELF-IDENTIFY AS VETERANS**

# 2011 Upcoming Events

## **Gravesite Flag Placement for Memorial Day**

May 28 - SNVMC - 7:30 a.m. & NNVMC - 8:00 a.m.

## **Special Forces Ceremony**

SNVMC - May 29 - 11:00 a.m.

## **Memorial Day Ceremony**

May 30 - NNVMC - 11:00 a.m. & SNVMC - 1:00 p.m.

## **Nevada Veterans Assistance League Golf Classic**

Boulder City - Boulder Creek Golf Club - June 4 - 7:00 a.m.  
Please call (702) 332-6741 for details

## **Flag Retirement Ceremony**

NNVMC - June 14 - Flag Day - 5:00 p.m.

## **Hot Rod Car Show & Fathers Day Program**

NSVH - June 19 - 10:00 a.m.

## **Agency Leadership Team**

## **Veterans Service Commission Meetings**

Elko - June 16 & 17 - 9:00 a.m.

## **Nevada State Veterans Home 9th Birthday & Annual Open House**

NSVH - August 12 - 6:00 p.m.

## **Agency Leadership Team**

## **Veterans Service Commission Meetings**

Las Vegas - September 8 & 9 - 9:00 a.m. - Tentative

## **MIA/POW Ceremony**

Nellis AFB - North Las Vegas - September 16 - 10:00 a.m.

## **Veterans Olympics**

Nevada State Veterans Home - October 12 - 15

## **Homeless Veteran Mini-Stand Down**

Elko Convention Center - October 19, 10:00 a.m.

## **Veterans Day Parade**

Las Vegas - November 11 - 10:00 a.m.

## **Veterans Day Ceremony**

NNVMC & SNVMC - November 11 - 1:30 p.m.

## **Agency Leadership Team**

## **Veterans Service Commission Meetings**

Reno - December 8 & 9 - 9:00 a.m. - Tentative



*Governor Sandoval greets participants at the Veterans & National Guard Day at the Legislature this past March.*

## Contact Us

Nevada Office of Veterans Services  
Toll Free 1-866-630-VETS (8387)  
[www.veterans.nv.gov](http://www.veterans.nv.gov)

### **Reno Office**

5460 Reno Corporate Drive  
Reno, NV 89511  
(775) 688-1653

### **Las Vegas Office**

950 West Owens Avenue, Room 111  
Las Vegas, NV 89106  
(702) 636-3070

### **Satellite Office**

4800 Alpine, 2nd Floor  
Las Vegas, NV 89107

### **Elko County Office**

155 South 9th Street  
Elko, NV 89801  
(775) 777-1000

### **Churchill County Office**

485 West B Street, Suite 103  
Fallon, NV 89406  
(775) 428-1177

### **Southern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery**

1900 Buchanan Boulevard  
Boulder City, NV 89005  
(702) 486-5920

### **Northern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery**

P.O. Box 1919  
Fernley, NV 89408  
(775) 575-4441

### **Nevada State Veterans Home**

100 Veterans Memorial Drive  
Boulder City, NV 89005  
(702) 332-6784





**Nevada Office of Veterans Services**  
**950 West Owens Avenue, Suite 111**  
**Las Vegas, Nevada 89106**

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## **MAIL CALL!!!**

To receive NOVS news,  
visit [www.veterans.nv.gov](http://www.veterans.nv.gov),  
select Services for Women, and  
then Join Our Mailing List.  
We will never share, sell, or  
trade your information,



## **IN THIS ISSUE**

Women Veterans Summit Photos  
Veterans Benefits Assistance  
Our Combat Milestones  
She's The Air War Commander  
HERstory  
New College Grants & Savings  
Entrepreneurial Bootcamp  
Carole's Corner  
Legislation Of Interest To You

Ms. G. I. Jane  
1234 South Main Street  
Hometown, Nevada 89000